14.

THE PETITION

OF THE

Lord Major, Aldermen, and Common-Council-men of the City of *London*, in Common-Council assembled,

TO THE

PARLIAMENT,

For the Reducing of all Forein Trade under Government;

AS ALSO

THE PETITION,

Together with the

PROPOSALS

Of several

Merchants of *London*, on the behalf of themselves and the Merchants of *ENGLAND*.

Humbly tendred to the

Grand Committee of Parliament for Trade;

Containing the desired Manner and Method for such REGULATION.

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To the Right Honorable,

The Knights, Citizens, and Burgeſſes of the Commons Houſe of *PARLIAMENT*:

The Humble PETITION *of the Lord Major, Aldermen and Commons of the City of* London, *in Common-Council aſſembled;*

SHEWETH,

THat your Petitioners ſmart ſence of the Decay of *Trade*, hath driven them to a ſad and ſerious Enquiry into the Cauſe, And having (as they conceive) made a full Diſcovery thereof, think it their duty to the publick Intereſt, to repreſent the ſame in all humity to this Honorable Houſe: That which they apprehend moſt deſtructive, is the Diverſion of the moſt part of the Trade of Exporting the Commodities of our Native Growth and Manufactures, into

the hands of Aliens; By which the onely means of increaſing the Common Stock of our Nation is loſt, and if ſome timely Remedy be not applied by your Wiſdom and Authority, our Navigation muſt decay, our ſucceſsion of Engliſh Merchants be extinct, and our condition become the ſame it was, when thoſe of Foreign Nations were the onely Merchants known in *England*; and by our being more Buyers then Sellers, our Lands, by reaſon of the ſcarcity of Money, not worth above the tenth part of what they now are. And ſhould the Strangers be permitted, by themſelves here (who live ſingle in hired Chambers) exempt from family expence or the publick charge of all Offices, or by Packers and other mechanick perſons, to carry on their Trades as Engliſh; not onely this City, but all other His Majeſties Cities (Townes Corporate) and others, muſt neceſſarily decay, and be diſ-

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abled to ſerve the publick Government in purſe and office. For preſervation whereof, your Petitioners humbly pray,

That it may pleaſe this Honorable Houſe (the Sanctuary of the Commons of England*) to provide, That the Trade of* Exportation *(to foreign Parts) of all Engliſh Goods and Manufactures, by the Engliſh Subjects not yet incorporated, may be reduced under Government and Regulation, by His Majeſties Charter under the Great Seal of* England, *and confirmed to Engliſh onely. And that thoſe Trades that are already under Regulation, may be confirmed in ſuch manner, as may not exclude any Engliſh Merchant that ſubmits to the Government in all, or any the reſpective Ports and places of this His Majeſties Kingdom. And that all Aliens may pay the ſame Subſidies and Cuſtoms on all Engliſh Draperies by them exported, as they paid before the reduction of the Rates thereof, by the laſt Act of Parliament,*

And the Petitioners ſhall pray, *&c.*

TO

To the Right Honourable,

The Grand Committee of Parliament for *TRADE.*

The humble Petition of the respective Merchants of London, *Trading into Forreign parts, on the behalf of themselves, and the Merchants of the Out-Ports of this Kingdom;*

SHEWETH,

THat your Petitioners do humbly conceive, That as Government and Regulation is absolutely necessary for the common good of all Societies of men in general, so it is as expedient for all Subordinate degrees and professions in particular: and because the Forreign Trade is the onely means to enlarge the Common Stock, and Capital of the Nation, and the Revenue thereof, they therefore humbly pray,

That for the more ample Reasons offered in the Preamble of the annexed Proposals, for the desired Regulation, your Honours would be pleased to consider of the form therein humbly tendred, for the erection and execution of the Government of Forreign Trade, and to report the same to the Honourable House, as in your wisdoms you shall finde most conducing to the Publick good of the kingdom,

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, *&c.*

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REASONS
For the
REGULATION
OF
Forreign Trade.

WHereas much of the Honor, Happineſs, and Proſperity of this Kingdom doth depend upon the Forreign Trade and Commerce thereof, which therefore ought by all means, and with all care to be encouraged, and ſuch Laws made, as may prevent the decay, and remove the impediments and diſcouragements which hinders its encreaſe and advancement. And whereas experience doth ſufficiently manifeſt that want of good Order and Regulation, which opens the door to Ignorance on the one hand, and Covetouſneſs on the other, is the foundation, as of all evil in the general, ſo of thoſe in particular which relate to Trade. For whileſt on the one ſide great numbers of Artificers, and others, inexpert and ignorant men, take upon them to uſe the Art, Science, and Myſtery of Merchandizing into forreign parts, they, by reaſon

ſon of their unskilfulneſs, not onely impoveriſh themſelves, but alſo enrich the Forreigners who take advantage of their ignorance to advance their Commodities, and to debaſe thoſe of this Kingdom, and do often thereby alſo neceſſitate the more knowing Merchant to comply with their wills, to their great loſs, and the impoveriſhment of the whole kingdom; And alſo many Gentlemen, who would bring up ſome of their ſons in the Art and Science of Merchandizing, are diſcouraged, when they finde that after they have given good ſumms of money to binde their ſons Apprentices, to learn the ſaid Science; others, that never gave one penny, nor ſerved to learn the ſame, ſhall enjoy the like Priviledge of Trade, to the ruine, not onely of themſelves, but alſo of the Trade, ſo rendring the Fathers coſt and ſons ſervice inſignificant, as to the deſigned end of future livelihood. And on the other ſide, whileſt ſubtile and covetous men, who have attained to great eſtates and credits, having no Rule, but their own covetous deſires to walk by, ſome of them make it their work to oppreſs, and ſuppreſs young men, and fair dealing Merchants in their trades, by overlaying of Markets in Forreign parts, and buying up Commodities there; neceſsitating thereby, thoſe that have not equal ſtocks and credits with them, to looſe in the ſale of their Engliſh commodities, and to pay exceſsive rates for Forreign; And others, being ſhop-keepers, and Retailers, engroſs both the Merchants Trade, and the Retaylers alſo; thereby through ignorance ſpoyling the Trade abroad, and through their knowledge and acquaintance at home, circumventing the Merchant in the diſpoſe, and the meaner ſhop-keeper in the providing and diſpoſing of the Commodities of Forreign parts, that both being ruined, the whole Trade might come into a few hands, and they impoſe on the people what rates they pleaſe, the Trade muſt needs decay; many being undone, others diſcouraged,

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the native Commodities of this kingdom in Foreign parts debaſed, and Foreign Commodities Enhaunſed, the ſtranger enriched, and this kingdom impoveriſhed. And whereas ſutable remedies cannot be applyed againſt all the evils that cauſe the decay, nor means preſcribed for the encreaſe and advance of Trade and Commerce, without the knowledge of the particular Trades, and their dependencies, which none are ſo able to repreſent, as the Merchants themſelves, & yet that whilſt the Merchants remain unaſſociated, and not under a general Regulation by joynt counſel and conſent, it may be ſuppoſed that every man will be apt to make his own private intereſt and profit, his principle and end in all his adviſes and propoſals, ſo that probably things may be miſ-repreſented, which will be prevented, if the Merchants of every reſpective Trade were Aſſociated; for though a particular man may intend his private profit in all his actings and advices, yet it is ſure that the generality will promote the general concern of the Trade, which as it is their intereſt, ſo it is alſo the kingdoms intereſt.

And whereas Trade and Commerce eſpecially, as all other things in this world, is ſubject to many changes and alterations; and that ſuch Rules for the regulation of Trade cannot be ſo made, but that it may be needful for the general good, to make often additions of new, and to repeal and lay aſide former Rules, according to the times, exigences of affairs, and proceedings of their reſpective Countries, where, and with whom the Trade is driven.

And whereas of late years, many ſtrangers who come into this kingdom, live obſcurely in private Chambers, and contribute nothing to the Publick Charge, yet drive very great Trades, and by means of Packers, Porters, and other perſons of mean or no fortune, whom they imploy, do enter their Merchandize, both Imported, and Exported

into, and out of this kingdom, deceive the Kings Majesty of his Customes, and several Cities and Corporations of this kingdom, of their Duties of Scavage, Package, &c. and also hinder and prejudice many English Merchants, His Majesties faithful and loyal Subjects, who because they will not, contrary to Law, and their Duty, defraude his Majesty of his Customes, by entring strangers goods as English, which the others do, they loose their Commission and imployment; which abuse cannot be prevented, unless all Merchants be brought into Association, and none permitted to pass at the Custom-House, as English men, but Merchants of the said Association.

And whereas in former Ages, many of the Kings of this Land, out of their great wisdomes for the advancement of trade, have given their Royal Charters to several distinct sorts of Merchants, to Incorporate themselves for the better carrying on, and Regulating their respective Trades, as to the Merchants called, The Merchant Adventurers of *England*, the Merchants trading to *Turkey*, the *East-land* Merchants, the *Russia*, and *Muscovia* Merchants, and the Merchants trading to the *East-Indies*; which Societies have not onely found benefit, by the due Regulations of their Trades, but have been very serviceable to His Majesty, and the whole kingdom; have bred up many English Merchants in Trades in Foreign parts, advanced many young men, by lending them moneys without, or for very inconsiderable Interest, relieved many Merchants that have by the hand of God bin impoverished, maintained and upheld the Trade in the hands of the English, and the Honor of the English Nation in Forein parts, whereas other trades not incorporated, are in a manner totally lost, as to the English, and fallen into the hands of Strangers, as is demonstrable in the French and other Trades: Upon which grounds, as we humbly conceive, His Most Excellent Majesty since

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His moſt bleſſed Reſtauration, hath bin graciouſly pleaſed to renew, or confirm all, or moſt of the aforeſaid Charters.

And whereas the reaſon that moved the Parliament, in the third Year of King *James*, *Chap.* 6. to call in a Charter granted to a few Merchants trading to *Spain*, *Portugal*, and *France*, is now totally removed: And that there are very many Merchants in this Kingdom bred up, and educated in the Myſtery of Merchandizing, and every way ſufficient to carry on the whole Trade of this Kingdom into Foreign parts, which want nothing more then good Encouragement by the due Regulation of their Trades; Without which, it is humbly conceived, the Evils before-mentioned, cannot be prevented, nor the Trade upheld in the hands of the Engliſh, which cannot but be a great Impoveriſhment to the Kingdom, (it being a certain Maxim, That what ever the Engliſh carries out, he doth at laſt bring all, with its increaſe, home to his Native Countrey: Whereas on the contrary, the Strangers Deſign is not to enrich, but to carry away the Riches of the Nation.) But by the enſuing, or ſome ſuch like Aſſociation of, and for Regulation, as by your Honors ſhall be provided, It is hoped that Trade may be enlivened, the Engliſh Merchants encouraged, the Strangers Encroachments prevented, His Majeſties Cuſtoms augmented, and the Capital of the Nation in few years much encreaſed, and by ſuch Eſtabliſhment, His Majeſty and Your Honors, may at any time have before your view at once, how every reſpective Trade anſwers in its Exports, to its Imports, and ſo may ſee where chiefly the Intereſt of Trade is by which the Nation is enriched, and by which not; and of what uſe that may be in relation to the Publick, Your Honors beſt know: Wherefore

It is humbly Propoſed, That it may be Enacted,

THat by Authority of His Majeſties Royal Charters under the Great Seal of *England*, the ſeveral and reſpective Engliſh Merchants, trading into the Dominions of the *French* King, the Engliſh Merchants trading into the Dominions of the King of *Spain*, the Merchants trading into the Dominions of the King of *Portugal*, the Merchants trading into *Italy*, and ſuch other Merchants, as hereafter His Majeſty ſhall finde convenient, may be Aſſociated and Incorporated, for the better Regulating and Ordering of the ſaid reſpective Trades, to the profit of this Kingdom, in ſuch manner as is hereafter expreſſed, (that is to ſay;) That all the Engliſh Merchants trading into the Dominions of the *French* King, and ſo of the other reſpective Merchants, *mutatis mutandis*, being ſuch as have been bred up in the Science and Art of Merchandizing into Foreign parts, or ſuch as have for three years laſt paſt exerciſed the ſaid Science, and are not Shop-keepers or Retailers, and that ſhall take the Oathes of *Allegiance* and *Supremacy*, and ſuch an Oath for Submiſſion to the Regulations to be made, conformable to the Powers herein deſired; and not to colour any Foreign Goods, as by Your Honors ſhall be thought reaſonable, may as aforeſaid, be Incorporated, and made a Body Corporate in the Law, to all intents and purpoſes, under the Name and Style of the *Governor*, *Deputy*, and *Aſſiſtants* of the Merchants of *England*, trading into the Dominions of the *French* King, *&c.*

That His Majeſty in ſuch Charter, may pleaſe to nominate and appoint the firſt Governor, Deputy, Treaſurer, and ſuch number of Aſſiſtants, not exceeding four and twenty, nor leſs then twelve, as He ſhall judge fit; the ſaid Governor and

and Deputy to take the Oathes aforesaid, before such person or persons as His Majesty shall for that purpose Authorize: And that the said Governor or Deputy being so sworn, may be authorized to Administer (or for the ease of the Merchants in the countrey, under their hands and seals, to depute any Mayor of any Town Corporate in this Kingdom to Administer) the said Oathes to all other persons qualified as aforesaid, that shall be admitted into any of the said respective Associations.

That Annually on the day of or within days after the said respective Merchants so associated, shall meet at some convenient place within the City of *London*, where the Governor or Deputy for the time being, shall by some publick Writing for that purpose fixed on the *Royal Exchange*, appoint to choose out from amongst themselves a Governor, Deputy, Treasurer, and such number of Assistants, not exceeding four and twenty, nor less then twelve; And that all and every the Members of the said respective Associations, residing out of the City of *London*, may send up the Names of such persons residing in *London*, which he desires should be choosen, sealed up and directed to the Governor or Deputy of the said Association whereof he is a Member; which shall be opened at the said Meeting, and his Vote reckoned in the said Choice, as if he were present.

That the Governor, or Deputy, or any seven of the Assistants, may have power as often as occasion shall require, to summon the generality together, to some convenient place within the City of *London*: And that they, or the major part, shall have power to make such By-laws and Regulations for the well-ordering the said respective Trades, and to repeal, and make void such former *Rules* by them made, as they, or the major part, shall finde to conduce to the general Good, and to impose such Impositions on Goods imported and exported,

ported, for the Maintenance of the Government, not exceeding one twentieth part of the Customs as they now are, on all goods, except Wines; and on Wines, not exceeding one fortieth part of the Customs as they now are; As also to choose and appoint such Officer and Officers for the better execution of their Orders, as they shall finde convenient.

Provided, That no Rule of general Concernment shall pass for valid, till it hath been sent to such parts or places where there are six or more Members of that Society, to have their Votes of assent or dissent; upon the return of which Votes, at the next Meeting the said Votes from the countrey being reckoned with their Voting in person, it shall be established by the major Vote, or laid aside. Provided also, that no Rule or By-law to be made as aforesaid, shall extend to the reducing any foreign trade (other then that to the *East-Indies*) into a Joynt-stock, nor to limit any, for how much or how little they shall trade, nor at what price they shall buy or sell; but that every one may trade for as much or as little, and buy and sell his goods at such prices as he pleaseth.

And that to all Rules so made, all the Members of the respective Associations in all Ports and places, shall be obliged to submit, and to such Payments and Penalties thereby appointed.

That in any Port or Town Corporate, where there shall be a sufficient number of persons, Members of any of the said Associations, to constitute a Court according to the proportion appointed for the City of *London*, there they may choose Officers, and hold Courts, and for the well ordering the trade of that Port or place, according to the common Rules agreed on by the generality.

That every Merchant qualified as aforesaid, shall be Admitted, and at his first Admission into any of the said Associations, shall pay Five pounds towards the raising of a Stock for

for carrying on the Government, and in default, ſhall be eſteemed no Member thereof.

That any other perſon, though not a Merchant bred, not being an Artificer or Retailer, or having left off his Handy-craft and retayling Trade, ſhal be admitted for a Fine of Forty pounds, to any of the ſaid Aſſociations.

That any perſon being a Member of any one of the ſaid Aſſociations, may at any time be admitted into any other, taking the uſual Oath, and paying onely Forty ſhillings for his Fine of Admittance.

That all Apprentices whoſe Indentures be duly regiſtred, and all Sons born to the Members of any the ſaid Aſſociations, after his Father was a Member, may be made Free without any Fine.

That the Charters granted to the Merchants Adventurers of *England*, to the Merchants trading to the *Levant*, to the *Eaſt-land* Merchants, to the *Muſcovia* and *Ruſsia* Merchants, and to the Merchants trading to the *Eaſt-Indies*, may be confirmed, with the Enjoyment of any further Priviledges herein granted to the *French*, *Spaniſh*, *Portugal*, and *Italian* Merchants, they conforming to the Rules herein appointed for the Admiſsion of Members, *&c.*

That all perſons, Engliſh and Strangers, paſsing Goods inwards or outwards, may give a Bill to the Officer of that Society, under whoſe cognizance the place is, and pay to him the Impoſitions ſet by that Society, and that the Officer certifie under one Bill to the Collector, Cuſtomer, or other Officer for the Cuſtoms, whether he be a Member of of that Society, or not; and if he be not a Member of the ſaid Society, he ſhall pay the Cuſtom to His Majeſty, that Aliens are appointed to pay.

That no Officer paſs any Entry without ſuch Certificate, on the penalty of looſing his or their places.

That all, and any goods that ſhall be ſhipped to be tranſported,

ported, or any goods landed from Foreign parts, that have not first paid the Impositions set by that Society of Merchants, under whose cognizance the place is, to or from which the said goods are exported or imported, shall be forfeited $\frac{1}{3}$ to the Kings Majesty, $\frac{1}{3}$ to the Officer, and the other third to the Society of Merchants.

And that when any Seizure is made, or Information brought for the cause aforesaid, no Licence to compound may be granted to the Seizor or Informer, but onely by and with the consent of the Governor, Deputy, and Assistants of that Society concerned, or the major part of them, whereof the Governor or his Deputy to be one.

Provided, That this Association here desired, shall not prejudice a Charter granted to the Merchants of *Exeter*, trading to *France*, confirmed by Parliament in the fourth of King *James*; but that they may be at liberty to continue the same, or joyn in the Association, as they see cause.

That the Statute made in the third Year of King *James*, *Chap. 6.* giving leave to all persons to trade into *Spain*, *Portugal* and *France*, may be Repealed.

FINIS.